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ABSTRACT

Nine recommendations for joint action by institutions of higher education, states, and school districts to prepare, select, and reward principals are proposed and discussed in this booklet. The booklet's introductory pages note the changes in the principal's role that have resulted from the new demands placed on education by reform efforts. The fact that principals have not received training for their new responsibilities is underlined. The booklet then turns to the specific proposals and the ways that institutions of higher education and state agencies can join with school districts to meet the new demand for more qualified administrators. The recommendations include (1) establishing state standards for principals' knowledge and skills, (2) creating local district programs for preparing staff members to become administrators, (3) reviewing and improving professional education for administrators, (4) certifying principals on the basis of skills and knowledge, (5) requiring districts to establish comprehensive employment selection methods, (6) evaluating principals using a statewide system, (7) establishing state and local incentive pay programs for administrators, (8) providing for continuing education for principals, and (9) making development of school principals a high priority goal of educational groups. (PGD)

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# Effective School Principals

## A Report to The Southern Regional Education Board by its Commission for Educational Quality

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## A Proposal for Joint Action by Higher Education, States, and School Districts

A Report to
The Southern Regional Education Board by Its
Commission for Educational Quality

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# Foreword

Today's educational reforms aimed at raising quality will dramatically change school principals' jobs. Principals will be called on to manage change, a task for which few have been prepared. They will have to create the climate for renewed emphasis on student and teacher performance. If principals cannot do these things, state quality improvement efforts will fall short. For states, higher education, and school districts, this presents a challenge to develop new ways to select, prepare, and reward school principals. These ways should be built around the essential knowledge and skills of effective principals.

Higher education and the schools in each state need to establish programs that pull together the best of current efforts already in place and develop new ones where needed. Higher education's stake in working with school and state leaders to prepare principals should be clear. For anyone who might doubt this is a priority for higher education, consider this — if the success or failure of a school depends so heavily on the principal, then the success or failure of students who enter college also is influenced by how well their principals performed.

This report from SREB's Commission for Educational Quality offers specific recommendations for developing effective principals. It can be a helpful guide to educational leaders who believe that changes are needed in the roles of principals and how they are selected, prepared, and rewarded.

Winfred L. Godwin
President

# Effective School Principals

## A Proposal for Joint Action by Higher Education, States, and School Districts

Performance—that is the key to the SREB proposal for changing how principals are prepared, selected, and rewarded. States and schools are still relying on paper credentials to certify principals for employment. These paper credentials are the end result of accumulating courses, usually part-time over several years. Often, principals are hired on the basis of "who you know," prepared by taking a series of "Educational Administration 500" courses, and rewarded for being managers but not necessarily "leaders of instruction."

If a principal is the single most important person in a school—and there is widespread agreement on this—then states, local districts, and higher education need to look at how principals are selected, prepared, and rewarded.

The success of today's educational reforms will be determined in the classrooms. Principals must provide the leadership for changes expected by the public and public officials. They will be responsible for establishing the climate and setting or reinforcing high expectations for teachers and for students.

The SREB Commission's proposal for principals is tied to the skills and knowledge needed to be an effective principal—now more than ever before, known quantities. We have a better idea of what it takes to be a good principal. The skills, knowledge, and behavior characteristics can be defined and observed. Finding persons with potential, developing the necessary qualities, and evaluating and rewarding principals on this basis—that is the Commission's proposal.

The recommendations for a comprehensive plan to improve school leadership are:

- **Each state department of education should establish knowledge and skills of effective principals. School superintendents, principals, teachers, college faculty, business leaders, and lay citizens should be involved.**
- **Each state department of education should require district programs that identify future principals and prepare them for school leadership.**

- **State agencies and colleges should review programs that prepare school principals against criteria that include, but are not limited to:**

  *Content focused on knowledge and skills of effective principals*
  *Admission standards that include assessment of aptitude, skills, and knowledge*
  *Intensive, full-time, in-the-school experiences*
  *Courses taught by faculty from throughout the university and by practicing school administrators*
  *Full-time experiences in school administration for university faculty.*

  **States should encourage changes in programs that prepare principals through such actions as:**

  *Special funding to supplement enrollment-driven formulas*
  *Flexibility in faculty pay and promotion systems to encourage faculty to work directly with schools*
  *Combining of programs to improve quality and concentrate resources*
  *Funding for joint college/school pilot projects*

- **States should certify principals on the basis of demonstrated skills and knowledge rather than the accumulation of paper credits. Skills can be demonstrated by:**

  *Completion of a "principal's preparation" program, with assessment of knowledge through an examination*
  *A full-time internship in a school, jointly developed and monitored by school and college faculty*

  **Beginning principals should be granted provisional certification until they successfully demonstrate on-the-job skills.**

- **States should require districts to have comprehensive employment selection methods. A state assessment center is an excellent way to determine skills of prospective principals.**

- **A statewide evaluation system for principals should be developed based on identified skills and knowledge of effective principals. Local districts willing to create plans that meet or exceed state standards should receive staff assistance.**

- **State and local incentive pay programs for school principals should be based on performance and effectiveness on the job.**

- **State-funded principals' academies are an established way to develop and deliver long-term continuing education programs for principals. These centers should "shop the market," including the schools, higher education, and business, for faculty to lead these programs.**

- **Development of school principals should be a priority for established state and local councils of college and school leaders.**

***...the success or failure of a public school depends more on the principal than any other single person."***

—— *The Need for Quality*, SREB, 1981

*Principals make change happen*

Performance and outcomes—these are the focus of today's educational reforms. State boards have adopted new policies. Legislatures and governors have approved programs and put substantial new funding into school reforms. Will performance and outcomes improve as a result? The answer depends in large part on school leaders, especially school principals. They must now provide the leadership to implement the reforms and manage real change in the schools.

Principals may be the weak link in the quality improvement effort. This is not because principals are incompetent. But, principals have not been selected and trained on the basis of what a principal must do to make sweeping reforms work. Few have been prepared to manage change—and managing change is essential for implementing current reforms.

The greater emphasis on performance of students, teachers, and school administrators means that states must rethink how principals are selected, prepared, and rewarded. Otherwise, states will be disappointed in a few years when they begin to measure educational performance and outcomes. Success of the reforms lies in the ability of principals to make change happen and to provide the momentum and atmosphere for growth among teachers and students in the schools.

Many new state policies deal specifically with performance of students and teachers. The Chief State School Officers' Organization recently approved a project to monitor educational outcomes state by state. Over 25 states have or are developing career ladder incentive programs for teachers. States have stepped in and mandated standards for teachers—through testing for entrance into teacher education programs and for certification and recertification. On-the-job assessment is now required for full certification in most SREB states.

*Higher education is the "gatekeeper"*

Performance standards for school leaders have not yet received the attention given to teacher and student standards; but that is changing. Arkansas, Georgia, and Texas have mandated accountability of school adminstrators through testing of currently employed administrators. Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and West Virginia require testing prior to certification, and the State Board of Education in North Carolina has recommended a test. Tennessee has implemented a career ladder for school administrators; North Carolina and South Carolina are developing similar programs. School incentive programs awarding grants to high performing schools are underway in Florida and South Carolina.

Changes in what principals do and how they do it will depend in good measure on the role of higher education, since it still plays a key role in preparing school principals. Higher education is currently the gatekeeper. Anyone wishing to be a principal must pass through the "higher education gate." Certification depends on the completion of state-approved programs or series of courses in educational administration. These programs generally do not provide a good match with the skills, knowledge, and behaviors possessed by successful principals. This notion is widely accepted.

College programs for educational administrators, especially school principals, cannot be addressed in isolation. Changes are needed in how principals are initially identified, selected, prepared, and rewarded. A model for rethinking the roles of higher education, districts, and states follows. The proposal for new ways to prepare school leaders depends on strong college/school cooperation and focuses on developing skills and knowledge associated with successful principals.

## Role of Principals

"Principals have to be 'instructional leaders' in the schools." Overwhelming support for this idea comes up in every discussion of the role of the principal in educational reform. But this is an elusive idea. Despite some helpful research, it is not entirely clear what the principal must do to be a leader of instruction.

*Leaders of instruction*

Principals themselves believe they spend only a small percentage of their time being instructional leaders. However, principals consider instructional leadership a top priority and claim they would like to spend more of their day on it. For most principals, a typical day includes a variety of face-to-face meetings, averaging less than two minutes each, with little time for planning. The principal may deal with a six-year-old in tears one minute, an irate parent the next, and later appear at a local business luncheon. The afternoon school hours may be spent attending a district mathematics curriculum committee meeting and observing two teachers in the classroom for the new state-mandated evaluation—before overseeing the loading of school buses. The evening often requires attending a PTA or civic meeting. Amid all this, the focus for the school—student learning and development of positive attitudes—may take second place.

In "effective schools"—schools where student learning exceeds prediction—the principal has emerged as probably the single most important factor. Four themes dominate in effective schools: (1) the principal runs the school and does not allow things to just happen; (2) an orderly and peaceful climate exists; (3) there are high expectations for the teachers and students in the school; and (4) goals of the school are focused on student learning, with a regular system to assess the achievement of student learning goals.

How do we select, prepare, and provide rewards for principals? On what basis do we make decisions about who is employed? What is included in preparation programs at universities? Are principals rewarded for just managing schools or must learning take place?

## School Leadership: A Plan for Action

*A performance-based model*

Higher education has a legitimate role in developing school leaders. Higher education programs to prepare school leaders should be viewed as one part of a continuing process—beginning with selection of potential candidates for entrance into school leadership positions and carrying through to the rewarding of those who perform well on the job. Obviously, higher education is important in developing the knowledge principals need, and it can help create better ways to select, prepare, and reward effective school leaders. State leaders can help by providing support and incentives to change "business as usual" patterns. Too often changes are taking place in separate efforts; they should be combined in overall state-coordinated programs.

The plan SREB proposes rethinks the roles of higher education, states, and districts in developing school principals. It includes:

1. Determining the knowledge and skills principals need.
2. Identifying potential candidates for principalship and leadership development through district programs.
3. College programs that are performance-based and involve faculty from throughout the institution.
4. Certification based on demonstrated performance, rather than paper credentials, and requiring a full-time internship.
5. Employment-level selection using information from assessment centers and other objective methods.
6. Evaluation based on skills, knowledge, and results.
7. Incentive systems for principals that encourage on-the-job effectiveness.
8. State-sponsored academies for continuing education that draw on the expertise of the colleges, schools, and business.
9. Formation of permanent relationships between colleges and schools.

## Knowledge and Skills of Effective Principals

*Knowledge and skills to be effective*

The average principal today is a white male, in his early 40s, with 15 years of experience as a principal. About one in six principals are women. Effectiveness of school principals is not related to years of teaching experience, whether one is female or male, any particular type of leadership style, or to the number or kinds of courses accumulated in graduate school. Several groups, including The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Assessment Center Project and the Florida study of high performing principals, have documented behaviors and skills of "high performers." The terms to describe them may differ, but the skills are similar.

NASSP (1985) identified the following skills:

*Problem analysis*—data collection and analysis
*Judgment*—critical evaluation and decision making
*Decisiveness*—acting when a decision is needed
*Organizational ability*—planning and scheduling personnel and resources
*Leadership*—guiding others to act
*Sensitivity*—awareness of others' needs
*Stress tolerance*—performing under pressure
*Communication*—speaking and writing skills

The Florida research (1984) of high-performing principals identified these characteristics:

*Information search/concept formation*—seeking and analyzing relevant data
*Judgment/decisiveness*—forming ideas and making decisions
*Organizational ability/control*—delegating authority, directing resources
*Proactive orientation/persuasiveness*—giving directions, taking charge
*Sensitivity*—managing interaction, being sensitive to needs
*Self-presentation*—possessing ability to clearly present ideas

The American Association of School Administrators (1982) has published competencies for graduates of college programs for school leaders that include the ability to:

1. *Design and establish a school climate with attainable goals (organizational, motivational, leadership, and interpersonal skills).*
2. *Understand and employ political skills for support of education (public relations, communication of position, negotiation).*
3. *Develop a systematic school curriculum (understand cognitive development, development of indicators for instruction).*
4. *Plan and implement an instructional management system (monitor student achievement).*
5. *Manage finances, materials, and human resources.*

Clearly, a complex set of behaviors is necessary to be a good school principal. All of the studies point to a core of competencies that include basic knowledge about curricula, supervision and evaluation of instruction, basic management skills, verbal and written skills, and the ability to interact with persons in a variety of situations. The key is to use these competencies to develop a comprehensive approach to selecting, preparing, and rewarding school principals.

**1** Each state department of education should establish knowledge and skills associated with effective principals. School superintendents, principals, teachers, college faculty, business leaders, and lay citizens should be involved.

## Finding Potential School Leaders

Principals are selected at two stages: (1) when they enter and graduate from educational administration programs, and (2) when they are employed by districts.

The first stage is a self-selection process. Entry standards are generally minimal, usually consisting of Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) or Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) scores, and undergraduate grade-point-averages.

*Identifying potential principals*

Districts should not just wait for graduates of educational administration programs to present themselves as potential principals. They can identify and encourage persons to enter an educational administration program. Some districts now use seminars to help prospective principals know what the job is like. Some initial screening occurs by principals who are unofficial mentors of staff.

School districts can use objective screening methods to identify potential principals. Without screening procedures, the process becomes much like that of the usual way of hiring a principal. That is, a lot of different factors may be considered but not many of them have to do with the behaviors closely associated with effective principals. The screening would provide a pool of candidates who might then begin the preparation process to become a school principal. (It would not preclude others from entering programs.)

Internships and administration aide positions offer ways to identify and select principals more rationally. For several years, Richland County School District One in Columbia, South Carolina, operated an intensive internship program of one to two years to develop potential school administrators. Persons with teaching experience were selected as administrative interns, and given experience with different administrators. At

the same time, they were enrolled in educational administration programs at the University of South Carolina. The district and university designed field experiences for the interns. They were paid their regular salary. District administrators claim this has been highly successful in creating a cadre of educational leaders for the district.

The South Carolina Department of Education funds a competitive grant program for districts called the Principal Apprenticeship Program. The program provides $10,000 per apprentice to districts. The aspiring principals work full-time for a school year under administrators in areas specified by the Department of Education.

*Universities and districts working together*

While internships are endorsed in theory by nearly all who want to improve school leadership, making them work is a challenge. Full-time internships are not cheap and funding usually comes from already financially burdened districts. Increasingly, the teacher shortage may be cited as a reason that persons can't be spared for a year of interning. Past experience indicates that it has not been easy for higher education and the schools to make arrangements that satisfy both; district and university policies usually do not promote such arrangements. In districts unable to provide a meaningful administrative internship, persons could be given a leave of absence to complete a full-time master's-level college program that would include field experiences. Institutions could coordinate the program, and more than one district could participate for a full range of experiences. Stipends or release time could be provided so that school personnel could complete programs, rather than taking a series of courses over three years on a part-time basis. A combination of state and local funding would be best.

**2** Each state department of education should require district programs that identify future principals and prepare them for school leadership. Guidelines, staff assistance, and matching funds for districts should be provided by the state.

## Preparing Future Principals

The second step is the college program, usually at the master's level, to prepare persons to be principals. Nearly all of these programs are in public universities. (In the SREB states more than 90 percent of the master's degrees in educational administration are awarded by public institutions.)

*Full-time programs*

Typically, these programs consist of courses, taken on a part-time basis, that include management, instruction, and school finance and law. By the early 1980s, although the number of degrees awarded in the SREB states had dropped sharply, three new educational administration programs at the master's level had been established in five years. The move by states to require graduate work in a teaching field is contributing to the decline of educational administration degrees.

There are scores of persons with educational administration degrees for every current principal's vacancy. But there is no way of knowing who may be actively seeking to be a principal. Many may not be willing to relocate for a principal's job. This has been traditionally true for women, who now account for more than half of the educational administration graduates. And, not all persons graduating from essentially open admissions programs may be good principal "material."

A review of master's level programs in educational administration by the Council of Higher Education in Virginia characterized the programs in the following way:

> Almost all are non-selective; most students work while enrolled in programs; virtually all students received "A"s and "B"s (not unlike other graduate programs); too many faculty did no scholarly research; and smaller programs had inadequate staffing.

Are the programs to prepare principals relevant? What about the fact that persons often complete programs years before they may become

principals? A survey in one state showed that only 25 percent of principals rated their graduate courses as developing needed skills, while the faculty overwhelmingly said the programs provided the skills.

Programs generally focus on knowledge and do not include developing skills. Institutions often have little incentive to change, and in many states certification standards dictate what is taught. Practical experience is generally limited to a short-term field experience set up by the student with little coordination between university faculty and school personnel. Field experience as part of the program is increasing, however. Seven SREB states (Alabama, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia) now, or will soon, require internships or planned practical experiences before initial certification—up from just three in 1982.

Even so, there are institutions making meaningful changes in programs; some of the changes are taking place by way of substantive reorganization. Innovations include cooperative university/district efforts with more practical experience; identifying needed competencies of graduates; increasing the use of faculty outside the colleges of education; and simulated experiences to teach skills.

For the most part these changes have been gradual and have occurred most often as individual faculty members update courses (NASSP, 1985). There is no well-defined core of knowledge in educational administration. Efforts to alter programs in general have produced few results. Faculty do not receive promotions or raises based on their efforts to pioneer new directions for programs.

*Conditions right for change*

Professors in educational administration programs are highly tenured, and recent experience in the schools is often limited. Flexibility of faculty is limited by funding when low student-faculty ratios are needed for field experiences. Research and publication usually determine faculty rewards—not working with schools to prepare principals.

A number of situations exist that may help make change possible. First, institutions know that legislators or governors are increasingly making education decisions heretofore left to schools and colleges. Legislation specifying continuing education for school administrators leads to questions about college programs. Fewer students but additional programs

raise questions about quality and financing. Many institutions operate programs without a critical mass of students or faculty. The fact that faculty in some educational administration departments have become involved in principals' academies will influence program changes. Large numbers of faculty will be retiring within the next few years, enabling change to occur more easily. The focus by numerous state departments of education on selection based on performance will certainly help. States have moved to judge quality of programs for teachers through scores on teacher certification tests; the same may become true for educational programs for principals.

**Entrance into Programs to Prepare Principals**

*Assessing of skills when entering programs*

Program entrance requirements, which now are generally based on grade- point-averages and SAT or GRE scores, could be broadened to include assessment of behaviors, such as judgment, organizational ability, and communication skills, that have been associated with effective school principals. These assessments should not be used to exclude students from programs, but they are valuable for counseling students, designing individual programs based on strengths and weaknesses, and reviewing program goals. Several institutions are doing this.

Georgia State University has established an assessment center with Atlanta area districts, and, as part of the first required course, all educational administration students in a master's program are assessed for the effective principal behaviors. The results are shared with each student and are used to design programs.

Texas A&M University's summer institute is central to its programs for prospective school administrators. The institute depends heavily on skills assessment and development.

**What to Include and Who Will Teach It**

College and university faculty are experts at conveying knowledge, but educational administration departments have less often taught skills (such as organizational ability and judgment) or the application of knowledge in simulated or real experiences. Focus has been on the academic matters.

*What programs should include*

The move to require performance where skills and knowledge must be demonstrated will mean that college programs must be more balanced and include on the job experiences. The knowledge and skills necessary for job performance would be the primary basis of what is taught. (Some suggest that skills development should be separate from academic grading, and that other criteria should be used to determine whether graduates possess organizational ability, verbal communication skills, and judgment to perform effectively.)

Calling on principals to be leaders of instruction places a focus on additional knowledge needed to be effective on the job. Educational reforms that focus on performance of teachers in the classroom and student learning emphasize the importance of principals' understanding curriculum and evaluation of teaching and student learning.

A report of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Consortium for Performance-based Preparation of Principals (1985) has developed a method to analyze programs for content and delivery of such skills as problem analysis, leadership, decision making, and written and oral communication. At Wichita State University in Kansas, everyone on the faculty has been trained as an assessor for the NASSP Assessment Center model. Wichita State's educational administration program was analyzed course by course in reference to the skills of problem analysis, judgment, organizational ability, decisiveness, leadership, sensitivity, and stress tolerance, and changes were made to close gaps. Oral and written communication skills lacked sufficient coverage, and voluntary summer school courses were added to aid in developing these skills.

Can persons be taught such skills as organizational ability, judgment, and leadership? Several projects are underway to determine how well some current efforts are working. NASSP's Springfield Development Seminar is being tested in South Carolina in conjunction with the state-sponsored principals' assessment center and academy. The program consists of simulated situations to develop and practice skills, with on-the-job coaching and follow-up. This kind of effort is time-consuming, but given that 1- or 2-day workshops do little to change behaviors, these new programs may be promising.

In most programs courses are now taught by the educational administration faculty of colleges of education. In Virginia, the National Executive Service Corps, an organization of retired business executives, is working with the Department of Education to provide mentors, lecturers, and experts in leadership skills to broaden experiences and enrich graduate programs. SREB has suggested that programs include courses from various disciplines rather than concentrating solely in educational administration courses. Programs that include conceptual areas, such as economics, development of skills, such as verbal communication or organizational ability, and technical knowledge that may be needed, such as school law and finance and supervision and evaluation of curriculum and teaching, call for involving several departments in the university.

*Faculty from several disciplines*

What faculty members are in the best position to teach verbal communication? The school of communication faculty?

Who can best address conflict resolution in schools? A practicing principal? An educational administration faculty member?

Who should provide instruction in school-based management? Faculty from the college of business?

Institutional decisions will have to be made about who will coordinate and assume responsibility for the program. The success of an approach involving faculty from throughout the university will depend on how institutions provide incentives and conditions for a team approach.

**Practice on the Job**

Successful programs to prepare principals will have to work with the schools to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Internships are to apply what has been learned in college courses. They may provide a perspective on the reality of the job or a practice situation, but they rarely help one learn new skills. Opportunities must be available for the application of knowledge and the practice of skills with follow-up and coaching. Simulations and case studies can also help.

Jointly developed internships, with payoff for the individual student, the higher education institution (or institutions in joint efforts), and the school district, will be the best model for strengthened college/school

programs. Present intern arrangements usually fulfill only a paper requirement for certification or for program completion. Small districts may need to form groups for joint arrangements.

*Develop creative internships*

Two problems are associated with programs that provide on-the-job experience and coaching. They are expensive, and faculty members at many institutions do not receive professional credit for helping schools. Colleges and universities are in the business of developing new knowledge, but they have been slow to recognize that working directly with schools can provide opportunities for pursuing research and service at the same time. Faculty and school personnel can work cooperatively to produce new knowledge. Some institutions have dealt with this problem by using non-tenured faculty who receive recognition and reward for working with schools.

Creative internships with public schools need to be established. States might consider selecting model school sites that would offer the best opportunity for interns to work with outstanding school principals. One arrangement might be for a full-time summer semester or a semester of part-time courses, followed by a full-time internship.

**3** State agencies and colleges should review programs that prepare school principals against criteria that include but are not limited to:

*a. Content focused on knowledge and skills of effective principals*
*b. Admission standards that include assessment of aptitude, skills, and knowledge*
*c. Intensive full-time, in-the-school experiences, with veteran principals heavily involved*
*d. Courses taught by faculty from throughout the university and by practicing school administrators*
*e. Full-time experiences in school administration for university faculty who supervise the in-school experiences*

States should encourage changes in programs through such actions as:

*a. Special funding to supplement enrollment-driven formulas*
*b. Flexibility in faculty pay and promotion systems to encourage faculty to work directly with schools*
*c. Combining of programs to improve quality and concentrate resources*
*d. Funding for joint college/school pilot projects to develop creative master's programs that include full-time internships.*

## Certifying School Principals

Present certification standards for principals are determined by states. All SREB states require a master's degree in educational administration or a master's degree with a specified number of courses related to school administration. Certification in most states is based on accumulating course credits, not on whether one has the skills and knowledge to be an effective principal. SREB states require that principals have taught from two to five years.

*Base certification on performance, not paper credentials*

A different system is possible. Certification can be based on the demonstration of knowledge and skills needed to perform well on the job. Certification need no longer be based on the accumulation of paper credits. Evaluation can include written tests, assessment of on-the-job performance, or performance in simulated situations. Certification can be awarded in stages, requiring demonstration of knowledge and skills to move from provisional to permanent certification. Permanent certification may include several levels if the state decides to tie certification to a career ladder for school administrators. A full-time internship, either as part of the master's program or following, would be included. Districts could use administrative aide or assistant principal positions for internships as long as it is a planned experience under the guidance of a skilled principal.

The requirement of at least two years of teaching, which is a part of principal certification in all SREB states, raises some questions when the requirements shift to skills and knowledge and away from paper credits and years of experience. There is agreement that being an instructional leader requires the ability to create an atmosphere for learning in a school. One argument for the teaching requirements is that to be an effective "instructional leader" one must have been a classroom teacher. The counterclaim is that being an instructional leader does not demand in-depth knowledge of teaching techniques learned through years of teaching and that school leadership is akin to leadership in any setting.

The differing roles of elementary and high school principals may be important. Instructional leadership in an elementary school may involve a

closer working relationship between the principal and teachers. A high school may have 50 teachers teaching a variety of subject matter—often at advanced levels. The high school principal will have to depend more heavily on master or lead teachers and other administrators in making decisions about curriculum and teaching.

Texas passed legislation in 1984 calling for certification of school principals and superintendents to be sufficiently flexible so that an educator may substitute approved experiences and professional training as part of educational requirements. Texas still requires two years of teaching experience for principals.

Several states now require demonstration of performance for certification as school principals (passing written tests and demonstrating on-the-job skills).

*Demonstrate performance on the job*

Florida's performance-based certification for school administrators requires written testing, an internship, assessment of on-the-job performance, and three levels of certification. The Florida program evolved through a comprehensive state plan to deal with selecting, preparing, and rewarding school leaders. In 1979, the legislature created the Florida Council on Educational Management to coordinate all state activities. Higher education institutions have been an integral part of the state's work. The effort began with the afore-mentioned research to identify the competencies of outstanding principals; programs to select, prepare, and certify the school administrators are built on that research.

Florida's certification process includes three levels. The first level requires demonstrating knowledge; the second level requires demonstrating knowledge and skills on the job; and the third level depends on results (primarily student achievement) in a principal's school. For Level I, a candidate must complete an educational administration program and pass a written test, which was developed by the Florida Association of Professors of Educational Administration. Members of the Florida Association of School Administrators played a major role by helping develop and review the examination. In 1985, the State Board of Education adopted the test. Content areas include: public school curriculum and instruction, organizational management and development, human resource management and development, leadership skills, communication skills, tech-

nology, education law, and education finance. Development of the test is an excellent example of real cooperation among higher education, a department of education, and school districts.

Level II certification in Florida requires on-the-job, high-level performance during a provisional period. This is similar to the provisional status now given to teachers in many SREB states. All beginning administrators must serve an internship with a qualified administrator. Level III certification, to be phased in, will depend in large measure on the documentation of superior school results over a three-year period.

Tennessee's Administrator/Supervisor Career Ladder, which is also tied to certification for all persons entering administrative positions after July of 1984, has three levels: Provisional, Career Level I, and Career Level II. Movement up the career ladder depends on the assessment of knowledge, skills, and experience at each level. Evaluation includes written tests, observation of performance by a team of evaluators, and information from interviews and questionnaires answered by students and faculty. For instance, teachers are asked how frequently their principal performs an activity, for example, "Establishes with teachers clear expectations for time allocated to instruction." Competencies include instructional leadership, organizational management, communication and interpersonal relations, and professional growth and leadership. Principals must serve at least one year at the provisional level.

**4** States should certify principals on the basis of demonstrated skills and knowledge rather than the accumulation of paper credits. Skills can be demonstrated by:

a. *Completion of a "principal's preparation" program, with assessment of knowledge through an examination*
b. *A full-time internship in a school, jointly developed and monitored by school and college faculty*

Beginning principals should be granted provisional certification until they successfully demonstrate on-the-job skills. States should also consider permitting certification for those few who might have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge without completing the usual teaching experience and preparation programs. Managerial experience might be substituted for education courses.

## Hiring School Principals

Hiring school principals is the responsibility of local school boards. A recent state study showed 90 percent of its districts had no criteria for the job of principal. For those with criteria, the number one requirement was integrity, dependability, and willingness to follow instructions. Selection often relies on a "notion of fit" in a school system. The "good ole boy" system of choosing school principals is alive and well.

*Making changes in how districts select principals*

Of the steps in school leadership development—selection, preparation, and rewards—selection for employment is receiving most of the attention. Up to this point, the newest trends have focused on employment decisions. One model for assessment centers, that of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, is being used not only by local districts, as originally envisioned by the designers of the program, but by several SREB states—South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Maryland, and West Virginia. These assessment centers identify behaviors associated with effective principals (verbal skills, judgment, organizational ability) and, through simulations, evaluate skills of candidates over several days. Evaluators are carefully trained. One state, South Carolina, requires that all candidates for employment as school principals must complete the assessment center process; information is provided to the district before employment.

Florida has mandated that careful selection procedures be established in districts, and calls for using some objective processes, such as structured interviews or assessment procedures, to look at performance potential of candidates. District plans must be comprehensive and include a process to screen, assess, and aid in developing the characteristics of prospective school leaders. All districts must use some performance sampling (job-related simulations, assessment centers, or structured interviews) in their systems. In addition, they must provide feedback to all applicants whose performance has been evaluated and furnish career counseling.

*Use assessment techniques for hiring*

The structured interviews used in Florida are based on past behavior to predict future behaviors, applying effective interviewing skills, and involving several individuals in organized discussions with and about final candidates. The applicant's strengths and weaknesses are compared to selection criteria and standards for the position. For instance, rather than asking a candidate "Are you well organized?" the question would be "Give me an example of a recent typical day and explain how you planned for it."

Other activities that can be beneficial to districts are internships and administrative aide positions to provide a pool of candidates as a part of the selection process.

Based on the available research, it can be argued that for change to take place at the local level, substantive changes in selection procedures are essential for a total effort to rebuild or or develop school systems. The plans should be designed to fit local needs. State policy can aid in the development of better procedures to emphasize selection on the basis of skills by providing the districts with criteria and staff assistance. States that have established assessment centers as a part of the state department of education programs or in conjunction with higher education programs have a way to do this. Funding for them should be continued and, if necessary, the centers expanded to meet the needs of the entire state.

5 States should require districts to have comprehensive employment selection methods. Assessment of behaviors shown by effective principals should be included. A state assessment center is an excellent way to determine skills of prospective principals.

# Evaluating and Rewarding School Principals

## Evaluation

The comprehensive rethinking of these issues would not be complete without evaluation for school principals. Evaluation is a critical part of certification based on performance; decisions to grant full certification require judgments that are based on factual evidence. Information from assessment during a provisional period as well as for continuing employment should be used to guide the continuing education needed by individuals. Career ladder or incentive programs for school administrators depend on effective evaluation systems including outcome measures. If evaluation systems do not include the knowledge and skills associated with effectiveness, then the remaining parts of the model become meaningless. What to evaluate can evolve from the process states use to identify the skills and knowledge needed to be an effective principal.

*Effective evaluation is essential*

As states begin to revise evaluation procedures to reflect the research on effective school leadership, districts can be aided either through a written state evaluation system or through state guidelines and technical assistance for design of local evaluation plans. In Florida, as the competencies of high-performing school leaders emerged from research, ways were identified to indicate whether or not a school principal demonstrated desired behaviors. For instance, "managing interaction" is a desired competency. A behavioral indicator would be "stimulates others to interact in a group situation; is able to get people to present ideas and others to respond."

**6** A statewide evaluation system for principals should be developed based on identified skills and knowledge of effective principals. Local districts willing to create plans that meet or exceed state standards should receive staff assistance.

**Incentive Programs**

Incentive programs based on demonstration of skills, on-the-job effectiveness, and results in the schools are underway in several SREB states.

A performance-based evaluation approach is being used in Tennessee, where certification for school administrators has been tied to the Administrator/Supervisor Career Ladder. The evaluation process is built on competencies and includes information from a variety of sources. The evaluation program, which focuses on performance rather than credentials, is designed to identify and reward outstanding administrator performance. Administrators receive supplements ranging from $2,000 to $7,000, depending on the career level attained. A second goal of the system is to improve instructional programs and support systems.

*Pay incentives for job effectiveness*

North Carolina and South Carolina are developing incentive programs for school administrators. The South Carolina program, legislated in 1984 and soon to be implemented, will reward school principals who demonstrate superior performance and productivity. Evaluation is to be based on instructional leadership performance as related to student learning and development. The State Board of Education is developing criteria to be used for projects to be pilot-tested in 1986-87.

The North Carolina Career Development Plan, being piloted in 16 districts, is designed to give administrators clear opportunities for advancement, recognition, and advanced pay for demonstrated effectiveness as a school manager and instructional leader. The plan includes four levels—initial status to Career Status II—and is based on continuous, comprehensive evaluation. For Career Status II, administrators will receive a salary two steps above the normal salary that would have applied. School principals are evaluated by the superintendent or a designee, with the assistance of a trained evaluator. The program also includes staff development on school effectiveness for all personnel in the state.

As states begin to reward school principals for effectiveness, they will have to permit more school-based management that allows principals greater decision making in terms of personnel and allocation of resources. It will be necessary to allow individuals to function at their highest capacity.

Incentives to schools, as opposed to individual administrator incentive programs, are another way to reward effectiveness on the job. Programs to reward effective schools are underway in Florida and South Carolina. School effectiveness should be assessed carefully through school outcomes, such as student attitudes and retention, as well as student achievement. Defining success in terms of student achievement alone is too narrow a measure.

**7** State and local pay incentive programs for school principals should be based on performance and effectiveness on the job.

## Providing Long-Term Education

The education of the school principal does not end with certification, and no college program alone can prepare persons to deal with the complexities of the job.

School districts historically have not devoted much time or money to developing school leadership; schools may spend only one-tenth as much as private business on personnel development. In most cases, staff development for principals means short-term or "one-shot" programs, frequently based on what principals themselves think they need. More often than not the focus is on immediate needs rather than long-term solutions to persistent school problems.

Continuing education for principals has been the central point of the reform effort for school leaders in the SREB region. State-level principals' academies and institutes have been the chief means for doing this. All SREB states have academies in place or in the planning stages.

The term "academy" or "institute" implies a permanent staff, although not necessarily a single central location. Most are sponsored by state departments of education; a few by universities. Georgia State University, in conjunction with Atlanta University and surrounding school districts, has established an institute on its campus. The Vanderbilt Principals' Institute has been operating in Tennessee for several years. The Institute of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has implemented the Principals' Executive Program. Texas A&M University and Baylor University sponsor principals' centers; the University of Virginia has established the School Improvement Project for area administrators.

*Academies — the best way to provide continuing education*

Principal centers have been organized in several districts in the region. The centers are organized by principals, directed by principals, and provide a collegial atmosphere for school leaders. An example is the Fairfax County (Virginia) Principals' Research group, planned and conducted by area principals, which focuses on improvement in the district. Last year the group concentrated on allocation of instructional staff and funds to improve student learning.

The Maryland Professional Development Academy offers long-term comprehensive programs for principals that provide coaching and follow-up on implementation of school changes. The West Virginia Principals Academy provides a 10-day summer session for principals in which they each write a school improvement plan for their school. Follow-up meetings, technical assistance, and evaluation of the plans are provided during the school year. Academy and local districts supply funds for implementation of the improvement plans in each principal's school.

North Carolina, under the auspices of the state-sponsored Staff Development Leadership Institute for Principals, has developed both short- and long-term education programs. One includes a short-term internship in which principals and assistant principals visit and learn from other outstanding principals in the state.

The South Carolina Leadership Academy includes a Business/Industry Liaison Program. Last year, over 20 South Carolina district superintendents attended IBM's Education Executive Program held in Connecticut in a program specifically designed for school administrators. A business/

industry liaison is another part of the North Carolina program. In cooperation with some 10 large corporations in the state, educators can participate in corporate staff development to assist administrators in developing supervisory, leadership, or interpersonal skills. The companies provide tuition and materials for courses; the state reimburses individuals for other expenses. States may need to be more aggressive in seeking and forming arrangements with the business community as programs are developed.

For continuing education to become an integral part of a plan based on performance, substantial effort should focus on knowledge and skill development identified with effective principals. One-shot seminars are useful to give principals information. However, for persons to change behaviors, activities need to include follow-up and coaching.

8 State-funded and -operated academies are an established way to develop and deliver long-term continuing education programs for principals. These centers should "shop the market," including the schools, higher education, and business, for faculty to lead these programs.

## Working Together: Colleges and Schools

School districts cannot singlehandedly establish performance-based programs to select, prepare, and reward principals. State policies that encourage and assist districts can make the difference. Joint college/school commitments that are grounded in a common element—the performance of principals—are essential. The present collection of local and state staff development activities, college programs, local selection techniques, and salaries based on years of experience need to, and can, be reexamined. Programs already existing in several states can serve as models and provide ideas on approaches. Campus and state higher education leaders can help states rethink the way they currently select, prepare, and reward school principals.

*School principals — a priority for college-school actions*

SREB's 1981 report, The Need for Quality, called for meaningful joint activities in each state of boards of higher education and schools. Generally, states have not addressed specific issues, such as teacher education or development of school principals, through on-going cooperative efforts of college and school leaders. This joint action is needed. In fact, it may be the only way to solve some of these problems. Governors, legislatures, or boards themselves should establish structures and formalize these needed college/school activities if they have not already done so.

9 Development of school principals should be a priority for established state and local councils of college and school leaders. SREB's Commission for Educational Quality in its report on getting students ready for college calls on governors and legislatures to establish state college/school councils to consider issues that call for joint action.

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